

FAITH PROMOTED,
AND
FEARS PREVENTED,
FROM
A PROPER VIEW OF AFFLICTIONS
AS GOD's ROD.
IN A
L E T T E R

From Mr JAMES YOUNG ^KWriter in Edinburgh,
to his Spouse, during his abode in London,
Anno 1697.

Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed,
Psal. xxxvii. 3.

Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall
we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your
heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these
things, Matth. vi. 31, 32.

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MDCCLXXII.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF LINCOLN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME THE FIRST

LONDON

Printed by J. Streater

at the Sign of the Gun

in St. Dunstons Church

near the Temple

1679

By Authority

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P R E F A C E.

A Man in prosperous circumstances may declaim with eloquence on the duty of patience and resignation under adversity; but as his reasoning on that subject is the result not of experience, but of speculation, it cannot be expected that his arguments will be attended with great force of persuasion. The case is widely different, when a truly pious man, under the immediate pressure of affliction, seems to "possess his soul in patience;" and endeavours to vindicate from harsh constructions, the severe dispensations of providence towards him: such a man cannot fail to command the attention of those who are in like circumstances.

The author of the following letter was, when he wrote it, reduced to great hardships, after enjoying a considerable share of the comforts of life: and to increase the severity of his affliction, he had the charge of a numerous family, from which he was at this time removed to a considerable distance, in quest of such employment as might relieve him in his straits. This was a situation which required the exercise of Christian patience; and accordingly, it appears that this pious man was endued with an entire resignation to the divine will: the unfeigned language of his heart seems to have been, "It is the LORD JEHOVAH, let him do what seemeth good in his sight."

To a person who is in the least degree inclined to serious thought, the meditations of such a man amidst his afflictions, cannot but be acceptable; and they must be doubly so to those who are themselves smarting under similar dispensations. For this reason the following letter is now made public; in which, if any where, considering the relation to whom it was written, we may conclude the author would disclose

disclose his mind with that freedom of expression and address, which is natural to a person who is under no restraint.

Did the editor publish this letter with a view of gratifying the reader's taste, by presenting him with a specimen of elegant epistolary writing, his design would be lost: the author's mind was too deeply affected, to allow him to pay a critical attention either to the manner of expression, or the structure and arrangement of his sentences, especially considering it was never intended for public view. But the reader will find many passages in this letter, which must appear uncommonly excellent, both on account of the truly Christian spirit which they breathe, and the striking original similes and allusions which they contain: and we may venture to say, that he who will overlook these excellencies, on account of a few inelegancies in expression which he may observe, must be possessed of a taste more finical than just.

Mr Young was son to Mr Andrew Young Writer to the Signet. On the 25th October 1687, he married Elisabeth Blackader, daughter of the Reverend Mr John Blackader, Minister of the Gospel at Traquair; by whom he had several children. The youngest was born December 3d 1699, two months after the death of Mr Young. Mrs Young survived her husband 33 years; and died *anno* 1732, aged 72.

The Reverend Mr John Blackader her father was a pious divine, suffered greatly for his adherence to the principles of the church of Scotland: he, with some others, were confined prisoners in the Bass, where he languished for six years till he died.

That those into whose hands this letter shall come, may through the divine blessing benefit by the perusal of it, is the earnest desire of

Edin. 25th Jan. 1772.

THE EDITOR.

LETTER, &c.

My dearest,

London, Oct. 26. 1697.

THIS same day seven years, if I remember right, was the first day of our united state. And I remember, as if the minister had had some foreknowledge that we should be in affliction, he tied me particularly to cherish you in your afflictions and troubles; which duty, that I may the better perform, I have written this letter: neither is that obligation then laid upon me, the only reason of my writing in this manner; but the law of love gently draws me to it. To be answerable to what you deserve, might have allowed of much more, but could permit me to do no less. Yea, the very providences of the Lord, first in making me the head of such a family, and then in inflicting such troubles upon that family, seem to call for this duty at my hand. He is unworthy to be a skipper, that sees a storm coming, and does not the best he can to order all things in the ship fitting for it, encouraging the men, and directing them to stand by their tackling.

My dear, as ye know I use not to be very nice in words, so I desire you will excuse me at this time. I have another thing to think on than to flourish words. The soldier does not use all these ceremonies in the day of battle, that he does in a peaceful weapon-shew.

To begin with an account of all the crosses and afflicting providences that I have met with since I

A

left

left Scotland, were too melancholy a subject to entertain you with; only in general I am still in the furnace. His anger seems, in these temporals, not to be turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. It is long since the sky was beset round with black clouds, which threaten a sad deluge of misery; and except he find some way of delivery, there can be no open door for me to get in at. Except that very hand that strikes forbear, there is none can save me: you know Quarles has it thus:

'Tis vain to fly, 'tis neither here nor there
Can 'scape that hand, until that hand forbear.
Ah me, where is he not, that's ev'ry where?

I need not think to be better here than in Scotland, except he please. I labour, and when with much toil I have brought a thing a pretty good length, the Lord is pleased, with one blast of providence, to put it all back again. So that as the mariner, in a great storm, continues at work; but being sensible of its inability to save his life, he is betwixt hands, so to speak, at prayers: so I, beside the duty of prayer, which is incumbent upon me likewise, think that betwixt hands, to be doing something for the fitting you and myself for this sad blast, is now become my duty.

My dear, I have mustered up a great many thoughts, for your and my own comfort: but I am not unsensible how little weight they will bear with either you or me, except the Lord be pleased to bless them. I know they will no more be able to bear any weight in your mind, if he bless them not, than a chain of steel-rings touched by the load-stone, (which ye know will make the links stick together), will be able to bear any stress. However, because the Lord has blessed these thoughts
to

to me, I dare not hide them from you, both for the manifestation of his goodness, which I reckon myself obliged in gratitude to declare, and in hopes that they may do you no harm. O that he who has the hearts of men in his hand, and can turn them whithersoever he pleases, would make them comfortably useful to you in this dark day!

My love, manifold are the meditations and arguments to move us to be in a posture of entire submission and resignation to the will of God. And,

I.

The supremeness of the nature and essence of God gives him a just title to do with us what he pleases. He is the Lord, and there is none like him, and therefore he says, "I will fulfil all my pleasure." I am convinced, that they who dare repine at his providences, have not a due apprehension of his sovereignty. He is the Potter, we are the clay; so he may make what vessels of us he pleases.

He is the author of all our good, the just and true proprietor of all his benefits: and this his sovereignty gives him a power to do with his own as he pleases, without doing any wrong: and as we ourselves are his, so all things we have are his, and not ours. So when he calls for his own, we have no reason to complain; but rather to be thankful he lent them so long. When he lends us any earthly comforts, he does not quit his property, but lends them only during his own holy pleasure. Yea, we often break the term of the Lord, and so no wonder he be provoked to call back his own.

II.

And as I would have you, my love, to take a look of his tremendous sovereignty; so I would have you to cast an eye upon our own littleness, or

rather nothingness. Alas what are we in his sight! How many thousands of fush caterpillars has he in his world! And suppose we were a thousand times more glorious creatures than we are; yet what are we before him, in whose sight the angels are not pure!

III.

But then consider not only the littleness and inconsiderableness of our natures, but their sinfulness. And I doubt not, but ye will own upon this account, that though he had made us a thousand times more miserable than we are, that he is holy in all his ways, and just in all his works. When we reflect upon his greatness, we may say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;" and when we reflect upon our own sinfulness, we may say, "We have sinned, and committed iniquity, and done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, &c. To us belongeth confusion of face, therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us."

IV.

Again, consider the firm and immutable decree of God. What fools would we be to be discontented with these things, which are as firmly ordained, as our very essence and being itself? Shall the decrees of heaven be altered for our pleasure? We may as well grudge and repine that we are ordinary men and women, and not kings and emperors, and queens and empresses, as grudge at our present lot; for it was as surely decreed for me, that these miseries should befall me, as it was, that I should not be king of England.

V.

Another meditation is this: What folly and madness were it for me to repine? This were to add

add both to my sin and misery. No, no, my love, every body is obliged to make the best of a bad market they can. If I should fret till I consumed all the moisture out of my body, what should I help myself? Plain reason says, it is folly to grudge at the thing I cannot mend. If I cannot bring my lot to my mind, I must bring my mind to my lot.

VI.

But then, not only does this repining add to our misery, upon the account it renders us more miserable by fretting, but is a ready way to provoke the Lord to add to our misery. Contentment, and a submissive carriage, not only line the inside of the yoke, and make it soft and easy to draw, but is a ready mean to engage the Lord to take it off altogether. Some well-bred dogs creep the more close to the ground, and the nearer their master, when they are beat, which engages the generous master to leave off striking. What avails our wrestling in the net of affliction, but to fasten us the faster? It hurts us forer to kick against the pricks. Are we able to pull at one end, when he draws at another? Did ever any body won any thing at God's hand by force? A sucking child when he grasps at the staff in my hand, is a thousand times more able to pull it from me against my will, than I am to pull from my Maker what he is not willing to give.

My love, these are some of the bands of iron that tie me to this duty of contentment; but now I am going to let you see some of the cords of silk, that gently, and yet forcibly bind me to this duty. And among the foremost of these is,

VII.

The love of God shed abroad in my soul. I know he loves me, which I prove by my loving of

him. This I could not do till he gave me this love, and this giving of this love is love. Shall I grudge at the strokes given by my Beloved's hand? No: I profess I love that hand so dearly, that I love it beating me, and the blows given me by it, in so much as they are given by it, for its sake.

VIII.

But again, how ravishing is it sometimes to feel the very hand that gives the blow, that makes the poor creature to stagger and be like to tumble over, gripe, hold up, and recover us from falling? Just like the tender-hearted mother, when she gives her young child (that can hardly go alone, it is so young) a tip, whereby it is like to fall, with the same hand she gave the gentle stroke, gripes and keeps up the child from falling. Here is the love of God; if it had not been for this, how should our souls so often escape the net of the fowler; when we, like David, are ready to conclude, surely one day or other we shall fall by the hand of Saul?

IX.

But to pursue this simile: Not only does he give his children an helping hand and upholding gripe, but continues to lead us on, as if we were weakened by the dash we got: he will not trust us to go alone, but takes us by the hand and leads us safely and softly through all hazards. O blessed hazards! O happy crosses! O sweet afflictions! O desirable troubles, that procure such company and such conduct!

X.

Another encouragement and comfort under the rod is, that thereby he purifies us. What is the design of the goldsmith, when he puts his gold into the fire, but to purify it? It is not to burn it away nor consume it. Why are we so oft steeped

in aquafortis, is it not to eat away our rust? Affliction is like the oil that they anoint the wheels of the clock with, which makes it run without stopping. Wherefore think you is the Lord pleased to tear us in pieces with afflictions, but as the clock-maker takes the clock in pieces, that the fault may be seen and mended? Let us be content to have our dust and dirt cleaned from our wheels, and to have a little more lead soldered on our ballance that was too light, that we may keep time with the great never-erring dial of his word.

XI.

My dear, there comes in my mind, a-story I have heard of a famous general, whom I knew, that to encourage his soldiers to keep on in a straight course, without breaking their order or ranks, when there was any mire in the way, would heartily walk through it before them himself, with his stockings and shoes on his feet, and so march on without drying them. O has not the Captain of our salvation trode the same paths before us! Shall we be shy to pass through these mires, wherein we see the print of the sacred feet of our blessed Lord Jesus before us? Are we better than he? Or shall we fail to follow his example, who endured the cross, despising the shame?

XII.

Excuse my miscellaneous way of writing. In clock-work, that which makes it all pleasant and lively, is the motion whereby that part of the wheel which now is upmost must immediately be downmost, and so in a continual revolution; as also that which makes the ornament and comeliness of the great world, is the revolutions, turnings, roundings, ups and downs of it. This is the very nature of all things under the sun; and why should you or I grudge to keep our part, and be sometimes

times down, as well as we have been sometimes up? This circulation is that which makes the world pleasant. If affairs stood always still, we should be in hazard of being like standing clocks.

XIII.

But this turning not only adds to the ornament of the world, but also prevents corruption. The Christian that is not poured from vessel to vessel, is ready to gather much dregs, or to turn like stagnating water, which gathers mud and corruption; whereas the purling quick-running stream keeps always clear.

XIV.

Consider, my dearest, that others must have their share, as well as we have had ours. These worldly goods must circulate. The sun must not stand still for love of us, to give us a perpetual day; else what should become of these living under other climates, or these parts of the world that are under darkness when we have light?

XV.

And this circulation of things may demonstrate to us the inconstancy and uncertainty of the things of this world. Must not that part of the wheel that now is upmost be turned immediately into the mire? As I remember a victorious king, who was so proud, as to have his chariot drawn by four conquered kings instead of horses; and seeing one of them look stedfastly upon the wheel of the chariot he was drawing; the conqueror asked him, why he looked so stedfastly upon the wheel? I look, quoth he, to see that same part that just now is upmost turned down immediately, which minds me of the inconstancy and uncertainty of this world, and how just now I was a king, &c.

XVI.

But to turn to another thought. Perhaps, my dear,

dear, it may not be uncomfortable for us to take a look of our pilgrim state. What cares the traveller that has a good house of his own at home, though he fare and lie hard a night or two by the way in his home-coming? These worldly troubles are but like a bad bed, and too thin of clothes, or too short for the traveller: will he not sleep the more pleasantly when he comes home to his own large easy bed? A little patience, and we shall come home.

XVII.

My dearest, if it had been a time of persecution for righteousness sake, would not you have thought yourself obliged to suffer, for righteousness sake? what if the Lord will have us suffer as much in a time of no persecution, as if there were? The same arguments bind us chearfully to do it now as then. For,

XVIII.

It gives the like trial of the truth and preciousness of our faith. This very one thing, if blessed of the Lord, might be of great comfort to us. How should we know our grace to be real, if it were never tried? Unspeakable is the comfort that arises unto the believer's soul, upon the proof and approbation of his graces. Suppose a beggar finds a ring, which he supposes may be gold, but does not certainly know till he carries it to a goldsmith, and desires him to try it; the goldsmith tries, and passes verdict upon it, that it is good gold: then, and not till then is the time that the poor creature's joy commences.

XIX.

Or to turn about to another thought. Will ye tell me, how we come to be so much troubled at so short a trial? What is the length of our days; a hand-breadth, a span, and it is gone? and of
this

this hand-breadth, the half, by the course of nature, past already. Pray ye, where are our grandfathers, our fathers and mothers? is not their time past, and their acquaintances, whom you and I knew when we were children? Is it not just like a dream, to think on the days of old, or like a tale that hath been told? Are not they all gone away like a shadow, and left no remembrance behind them? Like a bird that flies through the air, and leaves no vestige behind it; or like a ship that cuts out its way in the sea, but immediately the water closes up behind it, and the place is not known through which it went? What, should we vex ourselves for a momentary trouble? I always valued things by their duration, and therefore must think the less of these miseries upon the account of their brevity.

XX.

But suppose you should be ready to think even a few years long; I give you this answer: Either our afflictions shall be very violent, and so not lasting, according to that axiom, That no violent thing is lasting: and suppose they could be lasting with us, we could not last long with them; a few days violent sickness, or hunger, or pain, or extreme cold, or want, sends us home. Or then they shall be more lingering, and so not so violent; and so by custom turn more easy to be borne. The worst that we fear, is easy to these that never were better. It is easy to a born beggar to want these comfortable supplies that you and I have had; and why may it not turn easy to us too, if it please our Lord to take them from us?

XXI.

My love, I know your modesty, and that shame is one of the sad attendants of poverty. But when I begin to reflect more strictly upon it,

I consider it is only a thought of my own mind, and in my own power to elicit such a thought or no as I please. I likewise remember of an old saying, When there is no sin, there is no shame. Now, since it is in my power to make myself free of so much of my misery, I think I am a fool to myself if I don't do it.

XXII.

Or if these thoughts do not satisfy you, consider how many are more afflicted, and in greater misery than you or I ever have been, or perhaps ever will be in. I confess I cannot but be moved to see the misery of many poor creatures in this city of London, some crying and weeping in the streets, with a number of small children; some walking upon crutches, as I have seen severals, and both their feet swept away, I suppose with a cannon-bullet; some begging, and as if silence were the best oratory, saying never a word: well, think I, I have reason to thank God I am better than these people yet.

XXIII.

Or if such sad and melancholy arguments will not do with you, have the patience to hear a fable or two. It is a pretty fancy I have read somewhere of the hares, (who you know live but a miserable life, being always in such frights and hazards by the huntsmen), how they went all with one consent to a ditch or pool of water to drown themselves, as being weary of their lives; but when they came to the water, and saw so many frogs, whom they thought more miserable than themselves, (for ye know every boy murders the frogs), they came their ways back again contented. So let us comfort ourselves with our own lot. Suffer me to give then one more out of

Æsop:

Æsop: The mole and the fox were in a discourse, the fox complained mightily of the want of a tail, says the mole, Ye complain of toys, but I am blind.

XXIV.

I am afraid, my dearest, that we look so much on the dark side of the cross, that we seldom consider its light side, and that we are ready to pore so much upon our misery, as to forget to be thankful for our mercies. I would chiefly mention one in this paragraph, leaving the rest till I come to them as I go along, and it is this: Has the spring-tide of our afflictions made any ebb-tide in our affections? I appeal to yourself, if I do not love you more (having had greater proof of your virtue) this day, than when I married you; and though I cannot say I deserve it so well at your hand, as ye do at mine, yet I think I am not flattering myself, when I fancy your love to me to have stood like a rock, never moved with all the waves of adversity. No, my love, though these troubles have now set our persons at some distance, it is easily perceivable by both our letters, that our minds are at none. How oft when the world runs away from people, does the husband fret and blame the wife for it; and on the contrary, the wife blame the husband? and this is bitter as gall to them both. Is there any such thing betwixt you and me? As it was no small part of Job's trouble, that his wife gave him such devilish advice; so I can assure you, that your comforting letters are very refreshing to my soul. A good wife is best known in the day of her husband's adversity. My dearest, is it not a happy thing, that under the cross, as our souls are drawn nearer to God, so they are to one another? Are not our souls like lines drawn from the circumference to the centre; the nearer God

our

our centre, the nearer one another? A little chamber-fire at the back of the same wall wherein is a great furnace, burns the better the hotter the furnace be, because the heat of the furnace helps it. The more near we draw in love to God, it is but natural to us to love one another the better.

XXV.

How much have you and I both been taken with the lively descriptions of bravery and resolution of mind in the imaginary heroes mentioned in romances; and how much have we really loved a fictitious knight-errant for his valour, which existed only in the fancy of the author? Now, comes our own metal to be tried, shall we alter our opinion of bravery and resolution, because we are the persons that must be the actors ourselves? Seneca, in his book upon that question, Why bad things fall out to good men, seeing there is a providence? hath a passage to this purpose: "Dost thou wonder that the gods who love the best of men most, should appoint a fortune to those whom they would have best and most excellent, with which they may be exercised? But I do not, upon the account the gods take pleasure, when they behold great men striving with any calamity. Sometimes it is a pleasure to us to see a youth of a brisk mind, boldly rencounter a wild beast rushing out of its den, or if he fully endure the assaults of a lion; and the fight is the more acceptable to us, the more honestly and bravely he does it, &c. I see not what Jupiter hath more pleasant in the earth, &c. than to see Cato, &c." As if he had fancied that the gods took as much pleasure in seeing good men suffer adversity, as men in seeing heroes fight monsters with inimitable valour. Consider, my dearest, that he that imitates the good, must stand still to

it when his turn comes. The same author, though ye see he is but a Heathen, says, "There can no bad thing happen to a good man; contraries are not mixed; and even as so many rivers, so many showers from above, and such a great strength of springs from the main land, do neither change nor in the least alter the taste of the sea, so the force of adversity does not turn the mind of the brave."

XXVI.

I need not tell you, how great a mercy the sanctified use of the rod is. You know that it hath many a time been a means to make folk reflect upon their sinful courses, as Joseph's brethren, and Adonibezek, &c.; the punishment carrying so lively a picture of their crime, that all their obduracy in sin cannot hinder them to discern it: Jer. ii. 19. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts."

XXVII.

And as it has been a means of making people reflect upon their sinful courses, so has it been of bringing them unto Jesus. The poor creature is like the dove in Noah's ark; if it could have found rest for the soles of its feet, it would not have returned into the ark. I have many a time reflected upon myself, how when I was at ease I would begin to be comforted with this world, and take delight in the things of it, and begin to sit down and rest there, and in the mean time the relish of heavenly things become very faint to my appetite, and my desire after duty go quite away, yea it would be uneasy to me to go about duty, I would rather

ther take any divertisement than go to prayer; or if I went to prayer out of sense of duty, would dispatch it quickly and unconcernedly: when immediately comes a grievous cross from an unexpected airth, and obliges me to see the vanity of the world, looses my gripes of it, which I held as long as I could, and makes me have loving and warm thoughts of heaven, and not in such a haste to have my prayers ended, whereby grace is revived in my soul, &c.

XXVIII.

I have often wondered at Samson, how he could fancy Delilah, after she had so oft betrayed him to the Philistines. I think after I had found her out once, I should never have loved nor trusted her more. But this world is a Delilah, many a time it hath betrayed me, and yet I am still ready to retain a kindness for it. But believe me, the sanctified disappointments of it, I mean by the rod, is a good thing for weaning one's heart off it. I do confess, as in mechanism all upward motions are unnatural, (and that is the reason engineers are so much puzzled to force water upwards), so in spirituals also, all upward motions are unnatural; but the rod is God's engine whereby he drives our heavy earth-tending souls upwards.

XXIX.

Nor does the blessed rod only wean from this world, but even moves us to keep a stricter eye upon our walk in respect of the law of God. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep thy commandments." A saint is like a child's top, as long as he is whipt he goes very well, but let him alone he begins to tumble. So that by these things we may easily perceive how true the scripture is, that all things work together for good to them that love God.

XXX.

There is yet another thought that ought to make us the more contented with the rod of the Lord ; and it is this, that though he strikes us himself, yet he will not without a quarrel suffer another person to touch us ; as many parents are with their children. And when he hath used them as a rod for his people, he will then throw the rod into the fire. The parent is sure his own love will not suffer him to hurt his child, which another that wants that love, he fears may do.

XXXI.

Again, consider how abominable in the Lord's sight an idol of jealousy is. When we are too much in love with the world, there is less of our affections to spare for him ; as it is impossible every one of the seven channels of the river Nilus should empty as much water into the sea, as is in the one channel before it is divided. My love, have ye not observed your affections to worldly things and heavenly, like buckets in a well, when the one is up the other is down ? I remember I have heard the heavenly and earthly joys compared to oil and water, that will never well mix together : so it is in this case. And therefore it is very necessary that we be sometimes down in this world, that we may be up in heavenly things.

XXXII.

Another thing that comforts me mightily under these is, that they are but temporals ; and it does not concern my covenant-interest. My dearest, if I should see a ship wherein you were, split and sink, and in the mean time you get out, would I not be apt to care the less that strangers drowned ? My covenant-interest is my jewel ; and what though my house be set on fire, and my trash burned, if I get out my jewel ?

XXXIII. It

XXXIII.

It may perhaps not be amiss to remember, how submission to the will of God is the very proof and test he first tried man with, and continues to try him with through all ages. If Adam had been satisfied with the allowed fruits, which I am sure were enough to answer all his necessities and more; he could not have coveted the forbidden fruit, nor been persuaded to go over the bounds set him. What a wonderful instance of resignation to the Lord's will was Abraham, in the famous instance of Isaac, who when he could not see how the promise should be fulfilled, if Isaac were sacrificed, generously relied upon God's veracity, though he could see no visible way of the accomplishment of that promise?

XXXIV.

But it will again, perhaps, not be uncomfortable to consider what cordials the Lord allows his people to support them, when they are sorely stung by the serpentine afflictions of this world. Ye know the brazen serpent under the law in the wilderness, was to be looked to. See what we are to look unto; we are bid "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds," Heb. xii. 3.

XXXV.

Allow me to be miscellaneous: Job says, that "man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards." Some gentlemen's sons are cadies from their cradles; so is the Christian obliged to fight from his birth to his death. Religion, ye know, is not only a speculative thing but practical; it does not consist in a few words, but in deeds, and obliges us both to do and suffer. And that Christian that faints in the day of adversity, I would

have him consider, how oft he has told God that nothing should move him. Some (O that we may get grace not to be so ourselves!) boast mightily how they will fight; but when the day of battle comes, they swoon away like women.

XXXVI.

If temporal afflictions were always tokens of God's anger, we might be allowed to be grieved at them: but the holy scripture, ye know, cautions expressly against this thought, when it says, love and hatred is known by none of these things: and so careful is the Lord that we should not take them for any more than parental love, that he says, Heb. xii. 6. 7. "For whom the Lord loveth, he
" chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he
" receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God deal-
" eth with you as with sons: for what son is he
" whom the father chasteneth not?" &c.

XXXVII.

My dearest, I desire ye may not take it ill, that I have been so long of minding you of that which ye know very well; and it is, that God, our God and Father, is an eye-witness of all our trouble. Not a sigh but he hears it; he puts up our tears in his bottle; all our perplexities, secret anxieties, and distress of mind are known to him; our very night fears are seen by him. Is it not comfort to the child, that the father knows his trouble?

XXXVIII.

Nor stands he as an unconcerned spectator, looking with an unpitying eye upon our grief: "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." Cheer up, have we the sympathy of the Lord of heaven and earth? and does our troubles affect him? does he not by saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" reckon himself and his children all one; and will not this encourage us?

XXXIX. Think

XXXIX.

Think not ill, when you pray seriously for the removal of a cross, though he do not grant your prayer at first. I have heard it preached, that God takes pleasure in hearing his children cry unto him, and that he sometimes will not grant their prayer soon, that they may not leave off crying; as a loving mother, though she intend to give her child what it asks, has such pleasure in hearing it call and cry for it, that she will not too soon give it.

XL.

But to give you, or rather put you in mind of another comparison of the same nature: Oft-times we cry to God for things that he knows would hurt us; as children cry for knives, that would cut their fingers; or for charged pistols, that might kill them; and therefore it argues no want of love in God to refuse them. I always thought that was a fine word in Juvenal, which (though I cannot give it you with the same lustre that it runs in the Latin) is to this purpose: "Let the gods weigh what is fittest for us, for they will bestow these things that are fittest for us, instead of the pleasantest things: man is dearer, and more beloved by them, than he is by himself. We being hurried on by the impulse of our own minds, and a blind desire, ask of them a wife and children, but they themselves know what a wife and children they would be." His meaning is, the gods see it not good for us oft-times to have what we pray for; and God indeed sees it so.

XLI.

Beside, it may be our prayers cannot be said to be unheard, though they be not granted in that very thing that we ask. It may be he gives grace, which is much better than the thing we ask. If a child

child see a counter in his father's hand, and cry for it, if his father do not give him the counter itself, but a piece of true gold, it is much better, and the child's request cannot be said to be denied, though he got not the individual counter he asked. (Excuse me for comparing the Christian so oft to a child, for really in Christianity we are childish, and behave like children.) And yet so childish are we, as to think our prayer many a time not granted, because we have not the individual thing we asked.

XLII.

There is another comfortable thought, which perhaps few think upon, in relation to the afflicted and unprosperous; and it is this: As God's love or hatred is not known by the want of success and prosperity in the world; so also the goodness or badness of our actions are not to be judged by the goodness or badness of their events. Many a time a good man follows a good method, in a good design, for a good end, and all does not succeed; and sometimes he may be ready to join with the world, and blame himself. One says, *Careat, &c.*: his meaning is, he wishes that man himself to want success, that values deeds by their events. I have observed, when people give an account of a lost battle, generally the conduct of the general that was the loser is blamed; whereas I am apt to believe, the loser of the day has oft-times had more conduct and courage than the winner. I confess we are always ready to blame the unfortunate; and this is one of the miseries of the unfortunate, that they must suffer blame; whereas if they had thriven in the very same methods they followed, these methods and they both had been highly praised. So ready are men to value things by their upshot and event, which I have told you
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is the wrong way. And I have likewise shown you, that this blame or shame of it needs not touch you, except you please yourself.

XLIII.

Affliction tells what metal we are made of. Hold down the head of a tallow candle, and it goes out immediately; but hold down the head of a torch of wax or pitch, and it burns the better, and flames the more briskly. The Christian is like the torch. It is a pretty device in *Eicon Basilicon*; there is a palm-tree, with weights hanged upon it, with this motto, *Virtue grows under weight*; it being alledged, that that tree grows the better there be a weight or weights hanged upon the boughs.

XLIV.

A philosopher having a pleasant child dead, they were afraid to tell him, for fear of troubling him; however, at last they told him his child was dead, and behold all he made of it was, "I know," says he, "I did beget a mortal." So may we say, we knew that it was the very nature of these things to be uncertain; riches make themselves wings, and fly away.

XLV.

Again, I would have you to remember, how necessary these afflictions are for us. My dearest, they are the physic of the soul; and though they be bitter potions, no affliction for the present being joyous, but grievous, yet they contribute much to the health of the soul: and as a doctor gives not the same drugs to every patient; so, as our case requires, our afflictions are altered, and there is a new receipt to be made up for us.

XLVI.

But neither is their quality alone fixed by the gracious Physician of souls, but their quantity also

so; he knows that a superpurgation brings death, and therefore takes particular notice of the strength of the patient. Indeed some natures are harder to work upon than others: as also sometimes he sees fit to put in some things that gripe not only the belly, but the very heart; but then his patients want not precious cordials. A sight of the Physician's face is of itself a great cordial; but much more when he stays them with flagons, and comforts them with apples, (an antimelancholical fruit), Song ii. 5. 6. O how whole does the poor sick soul find itself, when he comes to the bed-side, and puts his left hand under its head, while his right hand doth embrace it!

XLVII.

Our blessed Lord says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," Matth. v. 16. My love, does not worldly prosperity dim the light of the candle of the Christian? does he not oft-times stand in need of the snuffers of affliction? Be not afraid, our Lord can snuff us very near, and not snuff us out; there is no fear his blessed hand tremble, and so come too near.

XLVIII.

Wherefore has the doctrine of the cross been so oft preached unto us? Wherefore has our blessed Lord borne it before us? was all this pains to fit us for the cross, and we never to meet with it? Have we been so long at school learning navigation and trigonometry, and to keep a ship's reckoning, and yet never go to sea? I believe we would be content to take the easiest way of travelling to heaven; but God does not allow many of his children to travel to heaven in coach and fix all the way. There is a great difference betwixt a pilgrim's going to the holy land, with much weariness

riness and expence, hunger, cold, and wet, and a student of geography's travelling by his map; he sits warm and dry in his good clean chamber, and looks over a few sheets of painted paper, only making two or three steps with his compasses to apply the distances of places to the scale of miles; whereas the other goes many a weary step with his feet: the former is the way we would fain be at in travelling to heaven.

XLIX.

My dear, what a happy state were we in, if there were an identity or unity of our wills with the will of God? He that swims with the stream is not troubled with its current. Alas! how oft do we vex ourselves, because we cannot make our way against the tide of providences? Is it not our duty to have no will but what is his? Shall we pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven;" and in the mean time grudge when our prayers are granted? What says our Saviour? "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." O my Lord, how happy were I, if my will were absorbed into thy will, that I might feel no nilling nor willing but what is in thee! then should I be in a state of perfect tranquillity; then my mind should be as free of storms, as they say the region above the moon is. Then should I find it nothing to deny myself, being perfectly cleansed from that base dross of selfishness. My assurance that my God is the supreme and uncontrouled disposer of events, should easily persuade me that all the accidents that can befall me, are but exact completions of his divine will, and therefore of mine own, so far as it is comprised in his: and therefore his dispensations towards me would be in effect but the acts of mine own will, with the superlative advantage

vantage of being directly his, who is wisdom, power, and love.

L.

My love, I know ye know better things, than to think that God meant by allowing us any comfortable use of the creature, that we should sit down and rest there; no, no; these things were but given us as so many ladders to climb up to heaven by. The design of these beautiful things, was but like the crystal of a watch, not to detain our sight in its shining transparent body; but the sight is to pass beyond it to the dial-plate. One Mr Pratt says well, "All the oriental lustres of the richest gems, all the enchanting beauties of exterior shapes, the exquisiteness of figures, the liveliness of colours, the harmony of sounds, the light and clarity of the enlivening sun, the ravishing form and order of all proceed from God." All the heroic virtues of the bravest minds, with the purity and quickness of the highest intellects, are all but emanations from the supreme Deity, whereby he designed not to enslave and detain our passions, but to refine and exalt our conceptions, to persuade us there is certainly in God much more than we can either see or comprehend. Now when God sees us stay by the way, and like children when sent on an errand, if they see any glittering gaudy toy, forget their errand, and fall a gazing and running after it, it is no wonder he should take this bewitching toy out of our way, and it may be give us a buffet to the boot. Alas! my love, can we deny but that we have both been too much taken up with doating upon the creature? let us now at length turn wise. What is the meaning of the rod, but that we should hear him that hath appointed it? It is observable of the
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woman in the Gospel, with the bloody issue, that she first spent all she had among the physicians, before she came to Christ.

LI.

It is true, that the Lord is pleased to keep us in the dark; we cannot sometimes perceive his justice, nor read his love written upon these sad afflictions we lie under, in so clear characters; his ways are in the deep waters, we cannot trace him out. But, my love, we look for the time, the happy time to come shortly, when we shall perceive the meaning of these things, and discern the harmonious concordance and agreement that is betwixt them all, to hold forth the glory of God. Our life is so short a thing, that we can no more tell now, how these things are for the glory of God, than one that stays but half a minute in a music-room, can tell how harmonious the tune was: all we see is but as it were one link of the chain of providence by itself. But we look for the time when we shall see these things clearly, and discern the pleasant thread of divine wisdom that runs through them all.

LII.

It is true, these temporal afflictions may render us less regarded or respected in the eyes of the world; but they do not make us less favourites of heaven. It may be we will not get so easy access to some great men as we did; but does this keep us back from access to our Lord? does this close the door of prayer? does ever the Lord say, I will not have poor afflicted things to come to me? No, no; the quite reverse; they neither hinder us from coming to God, nor God from coming to us; instead of being a hindrance, they are a reason for our coming to him, and pouring out our souls in secret. I appeal to yourself, if ever world-

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ly afflictions made you restrain prayer before God, or clogged your speech, or clipped the wings of your soul, that it could not take as far and as high a flight in this duty, as when the world run according to your own mind. Here are the sweet hours that make amends for the earthly miseries of the saints. And we cannot be said to be altogether destitute, while we have our private retreats to him, and liberty to pour out our souls unto him. It argues no defect in those heavenly joys, but in our appetites, that we are apt to relish them least with our sauce.

LIII.

When men have been long at sea, there is great joy upon the first discovery of the land, especially if it be their home. My love, let me cry to you to look out and see land, land, O Immanuel's land! let not these staggering storms so stupify us, let not these blustering winds so weaken our eyes, that we cannot take a look of Immanuel's land. Some say, when one fords a broad river, the safest way is not to look to the stream, for that turns the head giddy, and makes one ready to fall in; but the best way is to look over to the bank. O look not too much, my love, upon these turbulent streams, but over all to that happy harbour of God's saints, and refresh yourself with the solacing meditations of these uninterrupted entertainments and pleasures, which all the inhabitants of that land do enjoy.

LIV.

Let your soul mount with the wings of contemplation, and what you find wanting in the creature, you may discern in the Creator. My dear, if the Lord were pleased to put aside the vail, and display some of the rays of his all-conquering beauty to our souls, we might look with as despicable an

an eye upon all the world's glittering things, as the eagle that hath been soaring aloft staring on the sun, looks down upon the light of a glow-worm or candle. Alas! what is to be seen or found in the creature, that is not more eminently in him? One says: "These shadows of good that are scattered
 "over terrene things, as drops of dew, rarely, (he
 "means sparsely), are eminently in him as in an
 "infinite ocean." I remember likewise an apocryphal text, (which may have its own weight), Wisd. Sol. xiii. 3. speaking of the beauty of the creatures, such as the sun, moon, and stars,
 "With whose beauty if they being delighted, &c.
 "let them know how much better the Lord of
 "them is, for he the first Author of beauty hath
 "created them." vers. 4. "But if they were astonished at their power and virtue, let them understand by them how much mightier is he that
 "made them." vers. 5. "For by the greatness and
 "beauty of the creatures, proportionably the Maker of them is seen." Scholars say, that all desirable goodness is in God three ways. *First*, By way of eminency or excellency, that is to say, there is no goodness in the creature, but what is more eminently and in a higher degree in God. *2dly*, By way of defluency, or such a way as water-streams are in the spring or fountain, out of which they flow. Or else, *3dly*, Formally. God is the centre of all goodness, and all the goodness of the creatures are united and centred in him; as all the lines drawn from the circumference to the centre are united in that centre. Are we not fools then to delight ourselves so much in these puddled streams, when we have the clear fountain to go to? are we not fools to take so much comfort in these second-hand pleasures, when we can have them at the first hand? O happy are they whom God

gives the grace to take the advantage of the ebbing of these unstable waters of earthly pleasures, to get a piece nearer to Immanuel's land. I apprehend, that to many a poor soul an ebb-tide of this world, has been a stream-tide of heaven.

LV.

Again, remember, my love, that it is not only a bare removal of these miseries we are now in, that we are to expect; we are not only to look for a deliverance from the scratchings of these briers and thorns of this wilderness, but a pleasure, that no wonder though I were loath to venture to speak of; because I know, it not having entered into the heart of man, I cannot do it justice: but being emboldened by the hopes I have, that your own experience may in some part help my want of utterance, I am free to tell you, that if your own or my eyes were opened, to see one ray of that glorious Majesty's beauty, as these glorious saints do, that for ever satiate their never fully satisfied eyes with it; the queen of Sheba's fainting-fit, which she took at the sight of king Solomon's wisdom, 1 Kings x. 4. 5. 6. might appear but a faint resemblance of that swooning even to death itself, that our souls should suffer at the sight of such surprisingly ravishing perfections. No wonder that our imprisoned souls should break all the bolts and chains that fasten them to our bodies, to go after so glorious a sight. No wonder that our dazzled eyes should never more be able to see light; for who can see him and live? If I remember the famous Mr Boyle's expression right, it is to this purpose: "The eager soul having discovered such game as this, hauls so fiercely, as it breaks these latches that tie it to the body." Then might our full-fraughted joyful souls not only say as Joshua, chap. xxiii. 14. "Not one thing hath failed
" of

" of all the good things which the Lord our God
 " hath spoken concerning us; all hath come to pass
 " unto us, and not one thing hath failed thereof:"
 but cry out as the same queen of Sheba did, the
 half was not told me. Nor could I have conceived
 the hundredth part of the half, though it had been
 told me. For as all these glorious characters that
 the Holy Ghost gives in the scripture of this hea-
 venly bliss, are no more understood by the carnal
 part of the world, than an excellent Latin epitaph,
 cut upon a marble tomb-stone, is understood by
 one that cannot read, who believes indeed, that it
 is some fine words or verses; but can never have
 that relish of them, that a good Latin poet hath:
 even so, I suppose the saints themselves, while in
 this state of infancy, can have but a very faint ap-
 prehension of these unspeakable pleasures, in re-
 spect of what they shall have. Even the saints
 themselves, while in this sight-darkening clay-ta-
 bernacle, can no more have a true idea of these
 heavenly ravishing anthems and hallelujahs sung
 by the blessed choir of heaven; nor what it is that
 sweetens and accents their notes, than one that ne-
 ver learned the gammut or scale of music, can have
 the idea of a fine air by seeing it set in a music-
 book. My love, our souls are now so much clog-
 ged with clay, that as we cannot have a conception
 any thing near suitableness of these heavenly things,
 so we weary immediately of them. Our souls are
 like birds tied to a stone by a string, if we flighter
 up, the heavy stone keeps us back, and so we are
 immediately at the ground again: but O consider,
 when the string shall be cut, especially consider-
 ing, that that very moment our eyes shall also be
 opened, with what a clever and sprightly flight our
 souls shall flee away; how swift and high they
 shall mount to him who is the centre of their feli-

city. The needles and small bits of iron that ye have so oft seen jump to their beloved loadstone, when once within the sphere of its activity, are but faint resemblances of that eagerness of flight, these blessed souls shall make to their attracting centre. With what despising eyes shall they look down upon this world! How shall they wonder at their bewitchedness, that ever they esteemed it so much, and these things so little! Or rather perhaps, (for I am pretending to speak of a thing which I have but a glimmering knowledge of), how shall they be absorbed in one entire eternal thought of admiration of him, that is eternally admirable and adorable! But what am I saying? alas! what ideas can the unborn child have of light? How shall we be astonished, when we enter into that world of light! what a glorious surprisal think ye it will be to our unbodied souls, to see such corruscant glory! but when I think of the Lamb that is their light, I cannot say what I think, nor think what I would, nor will what I shall. It is here that I think silence the best of oratory. O what faint resemblances shall all our best communion thoughts be to one minute's enjoyment of him there! Here our spiritual performances, thoughts, and ideas of heavenly enjoyments, are but heavily done, our performances and acts of adoration are gone about as if we were cumbered with cold, we do them as uncleverly as a prisoner in shackles and fetters would run a race; we are like children, on just now, and off immediately; the least divertisement to the eyes, or tinkling in the ears, puts us quite off what we were upon. But when we are divested of this body of clay, our heaviness shall be turned into activity; we shall be clear sighted in our apprehensions of his perfections, and consequently lively in acts of adoration; our coldness that

that cumbered us, shall be thawed and melted by the warming, as well as shining rays of his beauty. His infinite perfections being the object of our adoration, cannot but make us a great deal more perfect in our performances: our jail-fred souls shall no more be clogged by these fetters of flesh; and our childish inconstancy, and easily diverted thoughts shall be fixed upon him, out of whom we can see nothing desirable. The purified and illuminated soul takes such an eager look of the admirable and infinite perfections of him, whom these angels, cherubims, and seraphims are always adoring, and discries such rapturing charms in his beauty, wisdom, holiness, and goodness, as kindles and heats it into an eternal flame of love, which can never cool nor be extinguished, so long as those infinite perfections continue to be its fuel, and that is for evermore. Suppose all the wisdom and sagacity of Solomon, and all the ancient and later wits; all the beauty and charming features of all the most exquisite pieces of his handy-work, that have been famous in all ages for their charms; all the strength of Samson and David's worthies, of all the champions of the earth, and all the courage and bravery of all the heroes in all histories, and all the glory, splendour and majesty of all the kings, Cæsars, emperors, and potentates of all the world; and then if you please, admit all the romances that ever were written, in their hyperbolical descriptions of all the admirable beauty of their imaginary ladies, and the wonderful valour of their undaunted knights, to be true, and add this to your former heap, and ten thousand times more; and suppose, I say, all these perfections to be concentrated and comprised in one person, how were it possible for any rational man but to love him! But, alas! what a feeble love were this to the ardent

dent flames that have been kindled by the soul-enamouring sight of him, whose perfections are not so much represented by all I have said, as the meridian sun is by a small candle-light! Yea, I know not but that what they call the pain of loss of the damned, may arise from a clear discovery of these perfections of God: and so this may create inexpressible desires to be united to these perfections, (for the very nature of perfection is such, that whatever rational creature apprehends it, it cannot but desire an union with it), which in the mean time the damned soul sees, and knows cannot be; and this creates a horrible torment of the soul. I wonder not that profane godless people, who care not for God, while they are in this world, think this pain of loss no great punishment; but if once God had unmasked his beauty, if I may speak so, these wretches cannot but be horribly tormented with an inutterable desire of heart to be united to him. Hunger is putting no positive torment or pain upon a man, but he suffers great trouble by your doing nothing to him, I mean by not answering the cravings of his hungry heart. A man that is deeply enamoured of a piece of clay that slights his addresses, may be in perfect health, and yet his heart feel an unsufferable torment by her slighting him. And if one bit of clay desired and not granted by one to another, can be so troublesome to bear, let us not have slight thoughts of that pain of loss, which these that are secluded from the presence of the Lord sustain and endure. The soul of man cannot have the idea of a very excellent thing, but he must also have a desire to be united unto it. But the eyes of the saints will be enlightened in such manner, as that they shall discover as much as they are capable to conceive, even with their enlarged faculties, of the infinity

infinity of the perfections and attributes of God, and particularly, his power in making, and wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, in saving the world. What do ye think a clear discovery of the glorious work of redemption, which the angels pry into, will make? What joyful hearts will we have, when we see Christ coming in the clouds? What joy, when believers shall find themselves on the right-hand party? will there be then any tears unwiped away from their eyes? will any there say, *i am sick*? My love, the perfections of our Lord are infinite! Now, philosophers describe infinity, to be that whereof something is always without or remains; so that when we have conceived all the perfections and loveliness we can, there always remains behind or without, unthought-of perfections in him that is infinite: so that it is absurd to think, that these blessed souls can nauseate or weary of their ravishing delightful ecstasies and raptures, throughout all the ages of endless eternity; for as these blessed souls do actually discover a vast deal of his unspeakable perfections, they likewise cannot but know, that there is a great deal more out of their sight. As when I stand at the sea-side, and look upon the ocean, I see a vast deal of water: but my judgment tells me, there is a great deal more, which I do not see, because it is beyond the horizon; so both what I see, and what I do not see, contribute to make up the idea and notion of the greatness of that ocean. You will excuse the simile, though it halts in this, that the unseen part of the ocean is easily conceived, because it is finite; and therefore it must heighten our admiration of that part of his goodness which lies beyond our sight, because it is infinite. My love, think ten thousand times more to be infinitely short of the degree of this happiness,
and

and then add eternity to its duration, and it may be it will make you think something less of these momentary troubles. Suppose all this world were one great book, printed in as small characters as a pocket Bible, and one short word in the beginning were dim and faint in the colour; but all the rest of this vast volume, the clearest, blackest, and correctest characters that can be imagined, how inconsiderable a thing were this one word, in respect of all the rest of the book? Alas! how inconsiderable are our few troublesome days, in respect of all the rest of eternity, whereof this is but one inconsiderable comparison?

LVI.

My love, I have been the longer upon this last thought, because when the chocking thick air of this low valley of misery, makes our hearts like to faint, we might perhaps find it refreshing to our souls, to walk up the hill, and take a little breathing in the pure refreshing air of Immanuel's land. We may take a look of this land of promise, not as the Israelites, who were not to enter, but as Caleb and Joshua; and that is the reason I have staid so long; the time is coming when we would be loath to come down the hill again. But I must turn to another consolatory thought, and that is, Think and act faith upon the promises. If I were writing to an ignorant person, I could quote some of them; but I know ye are acquainted with all the bushes where these sweet berries of consolation grow, ye know where the best clusters of the ripest of them are; and I heartily thank you, that ye have been so kind as to gather some of these and give me; yea, I must acknowledge, ye have sometimes forced them upon me, and put them as it were into my mouth; for which the Lord bless you, the Lord remember you for good concerning this,

this, and wipe not out your good deeds that ye have done, &c.

LVII.

And as the promises are refreshful to you, perhaps bygone providences of either throughbearing, or deliverance and outgate, may afford some comfort to you. Cannot, and may not, yea, ought we not to remember the outlettings of his throughbearing grace to our souls? O my love, how sweet are the thoughts of this to my soul! how sweetly did he carry me through that loss I had by the French? was it I, was it not his grace? But why should I begin with a single instance? this is so large a field of comfort, that I think I must not enter into it; but recommend you, yea in love I charge you, not to be forgetful, but take some time to recollect and think upon his throughbearing grace, and the instances of it. And then have we not experienced his delivering mercies also? Cannot our souls say, I looked round about me on all hands, and there was none to save me; the Lord he delivered me? &c. Such instances of his delivering mercies as, * * * * * when there was no way to escape it, except the Lord had done it that same morning, especially being in answer to prayer, ought not to be forgot; nor the Lord's bringing about * * * * * when I could do nothing in it neither. But why do I instance one or two, let your own bosom advise you about the several instances of his goodness.

LVIII.

And it is even some comfort also, to find my heart so deeply concerned with others in affliction. I hope this is the effect of the rod. They are fools that reckon grace too dear bought. It may be, I was not enough concerned with the poor, when I
was

was rich; and therefore I must be poor myself, to feel what they feel. Well, if it have this effect, this is some comfort.

LIX.

O but likewise it be comfortable to think, that our blessed Lord does not send us a warfare upon our own charges. A sweet Master we serve, he never sends us an errand, but he gives us money, lest we should want by the way; and strength, lest we should be weary and faint by the way. It is pleasant to live upon another's purse: and the more we ask the welcomer. If we must swim in the waters of affliction, it is himself that bears up our head; and it is easy to swim, when the head is borne up. O it is ravishing to hear him, when we begin to cry, 'The water is too deep, I pray thee, Lord, let not thy gripe go of me, or I will drown, answering, "Fear not, for I will never leave nor forsake thee." What need us fear then, my love, can we not do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us? and I am sure ye think we may trust him.

LX.

It may be, that this is one of the very ends and meanings of his providences, that we should learn to trust in him. What if the Lord's design be, that we should know what experimentally it is to live a life of faith? Perhaps we have liked too well to trust God's providence with a good bag of money in our chest; or, to give another touch at the former comparison, we would trust God to carry up our head in the dangerous waters of this world, but yet we would have our own feet at the ground. What a sad trusting, what a sad faith is this, to trust God and money both? It is but a vain fancy for one to think himself swimming, when he will still keep one foot at the ground. My dearest, I
blame

blame myself more in this than you, for I cannot forget how I have heard you speak in commendation of a life of faith, and trusting to providence. Alas, alas! perhaps, I have loved too much to pray, "Give me this day my daily bread;" but believed my prayer would be the better granted, that I had a half-year's provision by me, when the stile of that pattern of prayer allows but *day by day*. I have been too unwilling of such immediate dependance, and loved to have my provision not day by day, but month by month, or year by year. What if the Lord will have me to go without these leading-strings, and not to lean so much upon the crutches of the world? I have of late been thinking, that perhaps one of the reasons why covetous men take such pleasure in hoarding up money, is because they would fain not trust, and be out of the reach as it were of providence. What is this but to imitate these that built the tower of Babel, to be out of the reach of another deluge? but how easy is it for God to get at them? I remember ye told me of one, a friend now in glory, that was used with a life of dependance, that when another person complained of the hardness of the times, said, I am afraid we be forced to break upon our stock: she answered, I am not afraid we break upon ours; meaning the Lord's providence was her's and her husband's, and that it was sufficient enough, there was no fear of it, it was all she looked to: whereas the other looked only to money she had out in bank.

LXI.

I mistake you mightily, my dear, if it will not yield you comfort, to remember how he led you, and fed you all the days of old, when the people of the Lord were in a sad and suffering persecuted condition; when your worthy father durst not be
D seen,

teen, and when he lay under his six years cruel imprisonment, without ever once being brought before the council; wanted ye any thing then? My dearest, ye know what his providence is, ye have waded this ford before, when I was not worthy to be a sufferer; it will be a great shame to you, to be forced to go through the same ford that ye found no danger in: but as for me, I have never been at this school yet, so no wonder I cannot say my lesson so well at the first. Believe me, it is no wonder though one that has never been upon this ice, be feared at first setting his foot on it; ye have been through upon the ice, ye know it will bear you, ye did not find a well-eye or unfrozen spring in it all: and therefore, my love, ye cannot shun the imputation of a coward, if ye be afraid to venture on it: no wonder if I be affrighted at its cracking and bowing, a life of faith is not the natural way, it is opposite to it: we are ready to think we have a cold coal to blow at, when we have no more but providence.

LXII.

A Heathen poet said, *Qui mortem, &c.* "He that feareth death, loseth the very time he lives." It is just so with affliction; he that troubles himself too much, loseth the very mercies he enjoys; yea, as the proverb I have heard, Many a one is afraid for the day he never saw; so many a one are vexed with fear of that which never came upon them. Some perhaps have been anticipating their misery, tormenting themselves before the time: others tormenting themselves with that which the divine providence had by its decree ordered never to come upon them. Some again may have had more horrible apprehensions of the thing than they found it to be. Poverty is thought one of the worst of miseries; yet some find a thing, which in the

the proverb is called *glad poverty*. Trouble not yourself before the time, our Lord saith, " Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

LXIII.

My dearest; ye know when our children are sick, we do not keep them at so great a distance, as when they are in health. There are two things that I think not unobservable in relation to this thought; the first is, the parents give more of their company and kindness to the child; and the child even loves to have more of it, and uses more than ordinary boldness and earnestness in requesting of it. O are not both of these applicable to the afflicted saint's case? does not oft-times even the Lord, when his people are under the sickness of affliction, come more kindly to them than at other times? does he not allow them more of his presence? and on the other hand, does not even his children cry more after him? A child that dare hardly come into the room where ye are without leave, in health, how will he cry out if ye offer to stir from his bed-side, when in sickness? as if there were some mitigation of their trouble, by the parent's presence, and as if their sickness gave them a sort of title to it. Is it not just so with the child of God? How are the Psalms replenished with instances of this sort? " Lord, leave me not, for I am fore distressed. Be not far off, when trouble is at hand," &c. I believe it is a mistake that beggars are generally in, who think their very poverty in this world, entitles them to heaven when they die; but I believe it is no mistake in the children of God, to think that their afflictions in this world may entitle them to a greater boldness in their prayers to God for spiritual graces. Lord, since thou art pleased to afflict me, &c. let thy

thy Spirit guide me through these troubles. Ye know there are examples in the Psalms.

LXIV.

If we would look more to the first than to second causes, it might perhaps give some ease to our minds. How did this ease or compose David's mind, when Shimei cursed him? "Let him alone, the Lord hath sent him." What a foolish thing were it, if one should get a letter from a foreign kingdom, affronting or vexing him, to fall upon the post-man, who brought it from the post-office, and abuse him for it? Some people blame this and that, and the other thing, when any thing falls out against them: and some, I have heard, blame things so far even from the second cause itself, that I have been struck with surprise. Some again will be revenged on the second cause: a dog runs after and bites the stone that is thrown at him, without regarding the hand that threw it. These things cannot move of themselves without him, no more than the barrel of a watch can pull the chain, and move the wheels, when the spring is taken out of it. Take the poize or weight off the first cause, and the clock of second causes shall never move more against you. It were as reasonable to blame a clock for going, when the poize is on, as creatures for doing the Creator's pleasure. I need not caution here about sin. Every body will acknowledge, that when I fall down on my knees, and pray to God, that that is an act of worship: but I believe I am in no great error, when under every new accident, as some wrongfully call them, I look over the heads of all second causes to God himself, and take it as from him. I call that also a sort of worship.

LXV.

Let not your heart grieve, my love, because I have

Have been so long in London, and have not got settled into business. Many stay here waiting on business, till they be worse reduced than (blessed be the Lord!) I have ever yet been. Some indeed, by the divine providence, fall immediately into some good business; but they are very few. And then when it is so, there is more talking of that one that gets business, than perhaps of many that lie out: and this may be one of the reasons why so many come to this place. And beside, ye must consider, that providence appears in a very eminent manner, particularly——anent me. And though ye should hear of such an one who has thriven well, consider that it happens to them as a wise projector, who has many projects in his head; he tries them all privately, the third part of them does not hold good; and at length one or two of them does. These that hold not good he buries, and the world never hears tell of them; but such as prove good and take, make a great noise in the world. Just so it is with people that come to this place, ye may look upon one that thrives as a lighted torch in a dark night; and them that do not thrive, as unlighted ones; one lighted is more seen and noticed, than an hundred unlighted ones.

LXVI.

The end of Jonathan's rod was dipt in a honeycomb, and when he had tasted of it, his eyes that were like to fail were enlightened. Who can tell but it may be so with us? There is a sweetness in the blessed rod that the world knows not of. There is a sweetness even in the pouring out of the bitter complaint before the Lord, which I need not say much of to one that is so well acquainted with it. Only I would at present say two things of it; first, it is the best way to get ease; and secondly, sometimes it is the way to get an outgate

or deliverance. As for the first, I compare it to a woman that has a tumour or beeling in her breast, which the doctor thinks fit not to lance, till it is near the time; she has no ease till it is broken, and the matter get vent, and then comes ease. Ye know what the meaning of this is. But in the second place, it is a way to get an outgate, and to be delivered from the furnace. Throw a cake of lead into a fire, it must melt first before it drops through the grate: when one is melted before the Lord in prayer, then he suffers him to drop through the furnace; yea sometimes, like Jacob, he wrestles and prevails with God for the deliverance. I remember Ovid tells a story, how the giants fought with the gods: I know no better way to wrestle with God, but in earnest and humble prayer. O that we could wrestle and prevail! O that our joint prayers, like chained shot, could beat down every thing that stands in the way of our mercy! O that these arrows shot to heaven from our bended knees, and more bended souls, might hit the aim'd-at mark! It is a lawful war; our Saviour tells us, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Never lay down your weapons, my love, take no quarter, fight while there is a drop of blood in your veins, fight upon your knees, and though he should kill you, be still giving the other thrust of prayer: and though all hopes of life should fail, fight in your looks to him, fight in your sighs, fight in your groans, fight in your tears; and though ye could neither groan, sigh, nor tear, fight in your thoughts and inward desires; be couragious, he will not kill you.

LXVII.

Will the sympathy, tears, and prayers of a kind husband do you any good, my dearest? Do ye doubt of either of them? I need not take up much
paper

paper in proving of either. A man needs not use many arguments in a clear sun-shining day, to prove that the sun is shining. So I go to another thought.

LXVIII.

Consider, or rather remember, how the Holy Ghost bears up the soul of the Christian. Some are strangely borne up, so as may be matter of wonder. What strange instances in the books of martyrs? How did Stephen, in the hands of the rabble, look up stedfastly unto heaven, and see the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God? Acts vii. 55. How did Habakkuk, in the midst of temporal wants, cry out, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength," &c. What but the Holy Ghost supported him under these wants?

LXIX.

Another great ground of comfort is, that the Lord can easily afford help if he pleases. There are enough of arrows of salvation in his quiver, if he pleases to shoot, even when all likelihood is past. All means of preservation of the life of Hagar's child seemed to fail when the water was spent in the bottle; and when she being unable to endure the sight of the death of the child, laid him down at a bush, and went a good way off; yet the Lord in that extremity opened her eyes, and let her see a well of water. Believe me, my dearest, it gives great ease to me to think, what immediate influence the Lord has upon the hearts of men, and

and how soon, by putting a single thought into a man's heart, he could do all my business if he pleased.

LXX.

Or if you please to take the apostle Paul's advice: he allows us to take comfort from the resurrection of the dead; and that he founds upon the resurrection of our blessed Lord, as it is in that comfortable text, 1 Thess. iv. 13. 14.; and upon the same account, vers. 18. we are counselled, if not commanded, to "comfort one another with these words." My love, what a dream shall all these things we now think so much of, appear to us in that pleasant morning of the resurrection? Though I go many a night very weary (to call it no worse) to bed, with that distemper which has haunted me these many years*; yet how brisk and lively am I next morning very early? O what a weak resemblance is this, of that lively and comfortable resurrection to them which sleep in Christ Jesus!

LXXI.

When we were baptized, and first enlisted under the colours of Christ Jesus, and obliged to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh, do you think it was only against too great allurements and abundance of the world, that you were bound to fight? no, I believe you and I are obliged to fight also against the wants, as well as the overflowings, and temptations that way. Our honour, and that which is a thousand times of more concern, the honour of God our Master, and Christ Jesus the Captain of our salvation, is at the stake: O shall we shamefully throw down our arms, and run away from our colours?

LXXII.

O think upon the day of your espousals to Christ, the blessed Bridegroom of your soul. It was none

* An asthma.

of the articles of your contract of marriage, that ye should be free of worldly trouble. I believe ye were so glad to have the Bridegroom secured to you, that these things were either undervalued, or quite forgotten. O my dear, looks he to any less advantage than he did? is his beauty faded since? are the charming rays of his conquering beauty less enflaming to your soul? is there any more intrinsic value in this world than was then? Since ye have got him who is better than all things, care the less for trash.

LXXIII.

Take it not ill, my dearest, since it is in love, that I mind you of Lasswade, and the West-kirk near Edinburgh, and other communions. Took ye no resolutions on you there to follow Christ through well and wo? did ye there resolve to leave him the first bad way you came to? came ye not there to get strength for such a day as this? These were your pay-days, this seem to be your fighting days: have we taken our wages, and will we not fight?

LXXIV.

If none of these things prevail with you, as I am not unhopeful some of them will, take Christ's advice, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." O keep the eye of faith very steady upon him, as a well-furnished Saviour for all our wants. Let us act faith upon him as our Head, and so sensible of every pain that is in the body; as our Husband, and so concerned in all the wants of the family; as our Captain, and so concerned in all the fatigue and travel, and much more the wounds and sores we get in the service; as our Prophet, and so concerned to teach us in every dark time; as our Priest, and so it may be comfort to us that the sacrifice is already offered up for our sin; as our King, and so
concerned

concerned to defend us his subjects, and conquer all our enemies; as our strength, and so through him we can do all things. I leave it to yourself to enlarge upon his fulness, in your own meditation.

LXXV.

Lastly, my writing, and your reading of this letter, are additional ties and obligations upon us both, to submit ourselves tamely to the yoke of the Lord. We cannot say we are ignorant of our duty; the Lord help us to performance.

Now, I have spread the plaister for your and my own sore; but, alas! my dearest, I cannot make it to stick. O that the Physician of souls would warm it with his own breath, and put it to with his own powerful hands, and then it will be sure both to stick and cure.

I thank the Lord that has put me upon this piece of preparatory work for these gloomy dispensations which are in my view; and finding some ease by these thoughts of my trouble, (which I am afraid you are not altogether free of), I know you will take it kindly that I have told you what did me good.

If it please the Lord, who commands the mighty waters, to send me safe home to you this winter, I would caution you, that ye mistake not my fainting and bodily indisposition, which I have been much troubled with here, for a dejection or sinful despondency of mind.

That I have been some what free think not much, considering ye are the other half of myself I write to: and though it were not so, I reckon myself concerned to declare the goodness of God to my soul; and if there redounds the least grain of glory to him, what care I for myself, or how little esteem.

esteem any body have of me? A sight of God makes one despise themselves, as Job did.

Now the God of all consolation and patience bear up your soul, and comfort our spirits in this dark day of adversity. O that we were strengthened with the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. O that he who dwelt in the bush, and did not suffer it to consume, when it was in a flame of fire, may not suffer us to consume under the flames of the most scorching afflictions. The Lord be nearer to you than trouble; he that supported sinking Peter, support your soul, and win the blessing of these that are ready to perish.

My dearest in this lower world, remember me to all that pray for me, or in the least wish me well.

Now, my love, pass by my weaknesses in this letter, and take it as a proof, (I know not but it may be the last), that I am

Your loving Husband,

JAMES YOUNG.

P. S. I know I will not need to bid you pray for me, when you once hear I am at sea.

A P P E N D I X.

IT is natural enough to suppose, that a number of readers, upon perusing the foregoing letter, may be desirous to know what became of the worthy author; if providence opened a door of relief for him and his family at London, or if he returned to Edinburgh, and what followed thereon.

To gratify the anxiety of such, it is thought proper to inform them, that about the end of the year 1697, or beginning of the 1698, Mr Young returned by sea to Edinburgh. But for a more full and satisfactory account of the dispensations of providence at and after this period, the following is extracted from an original manuscript of Mrs Young's, intitled, *A short account of the Lord's way of dealing in providence towards me in my pilgrimage journey.* This account, though only begun in the year 1700, contains a brief summary of what she thought memorable from her youth up to that period, and carried on to the year 1724, which was eight years before her death. And concerning Mr Young's abode in London, she writes thus:—

All this while there was no appearance of any probable provision for our numerous family. Yet the Lord helped me to stand fixed in the assurance of relief, as I frequently said to my dear husband, who came home much discouraged with the several disappointments he had met with.

After his being some few months at home, the barrel of meal and the cruize of oil being almost spent,

spent, then did our kind and faithful Lord provide a way of business for my husband, which was a very seasonable mercy, and might have been sufficient to engage me ever after to a believing, patient dependence upon providence.

I shall pass what other remarks I might have had, during the while my husband continued in his business, till toward the latter end of August 1699; about which time, it pleased the Lord to visit our family with sickness upon one of the children. I do own, I did at first but too much despise the rod, supposing it to be some slight indisposition, which might soon go off, but finding it to be a formed fever, I was somewhat more alarmed.

I do remember, that all the foregoing summer, I was under a strong impression, that I was to encounter some extraordinary affliction; which made me frequently plead, that the Lord would prepare for, and reconcile my heart to an unknown cross. The fever went through all the children, but especially one of them was in very great danger, and it was concluded that he was dying, which threw me into great distress; nor could I possibly get him resigned; and that which made my trouble almost insupportable was, that the Lord in his sovereignty and justice, was pleased to hide his face, and withhold the soul-refreshing influences of his Spirit; and then I found it to be a dreadful trial, a present heavy affliction, and an absent Lord; under which I was like to sink, especially with sorrow for my rebellion in refusing to loose my gripes of the child. I had indeed a wrestling night of it, but at length the Lord was pleased to surprise me with so much of his soul-comforting presence, that I found not the want, nor was afraid of the loss of any thing, and was by grace made very willing to

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part

part with him, or any, or all of my children, if it should please the Lord to take them.

Under this sweet serenity of mind I continued several days; but ere long my submission met with another kind of trial, than the loss of children; for upon the 28th September 1699, my greatest earthly comfort, my dear husband was seized with a fever, which immediately struck me with terror; there were no very bad symptoms appeared until the fifth day, in which his fever grew very high, and then my hope of his recovery quite failed. On the sixth day, I was in such a case as it is not possible to express my grief, nor could I come at the least degree of submission to a final parting with him. I went in this distress to pour out my perplexed soul to my God, but came from duty as much under the pressure of my heavy load as when I went to it. Being thus perfectly nonplussed, I knew not what hand to turn me to, when by providence the reverend Mr. John Law came to visit my husband. I was so free with him, as to let him know somewhat of my case, particularly that I could not attain unto submission to the will of my God, in removing my dearest comfort from me. Mr. Law spoke very suitably to my present circumstances, but I do not just now distinctly remember what he said. Yet this one thing I am sure of, that it was blessed as a mean to bring me to some quiet. So I again went to prayer, crying earnestly that the Lord would be pleased to loose my heart, which was too much fixed on the creature-comfort. He did indeed wonderfully answer my prayer, by enabling me to make a full and free resignation of him to the Lord, and wholly to quit my claim to him, in hope that my loss should be sufficiently made up in himself. After which I was perfectly composed, having my heart fixed trusting
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in my God. And so I received the fatal blow of the removal of my dearest earthly love that night about twelve o'clock, on the 3d October 1679, after a fever of six days. Under which nothing below Omnipotence could possibly have supported me.

I never seriously reflect on that time, but with admiration of the wonderful mercy of God to me, under manifold weaknesses in both soul and body. For many weeks before that, I had scarce got sleep, and was within two months of my time to be delivered, and being always so tender, that very little fatigue usually did me much harm, but then I got a back for the burden. For as that was extraordinary, so was my strength; and which was wonderful, although I was left with a very heavy charge, having six children, and the near prospect of a seventh, yet was I kept from the smallest degree of anxiety for our temporal provision. The world knows what human probability there was to fear want, but I behoved to look above all that was human.

There was one bright step of providence which I must take notice of, and record. No sooner almost was my dear husband taken to heaven, but my compassionate Lord (who well knew how helpless I was) did signally manifest his care of me, by inclining the hearts of some kind friends as instruments, to act for me, in a way which perhaps I could never have thought of, far less would have presumed to propose. I heartily wish, and hope the Lord will bless and reward those who have been friends to such a destitute and desolate family. I have frequently thought, when I have reflected on that seasonable preventing mercy, though I had been never so much inclined to doubt God's providence, I had not time to do it, so quickly

was I prevented by his merciful ordering my relief. I was graciously kept up under my trouble for several days; but being unwatchful, and not so sensible of the Lord's kindness to me as I ought, I was left to give my thoughts too much liberty to expatiate on my temporal loss, and then the Lord was pleased in his justice to withdraw the former measure of his gracious and supporting presence, and make me to feel the weight of my burden on my own shoulders, which was like to sink me to death.

O then I found how weak I was without my God. But he well knew my frame, that I was no more than dust and ashes, and therefore was pleased in sovereign mercy to pity me, and return with his supporting and comforting grace, which prevented my utter fainting.

My time to be delivered drew near, and when I fell into labour, I was sinfully discouraged, having so many former instances of his kind compassion; however, I was surprised with my delivery, and also kept from these melancholy reflections on my former circumstances, particularly the want of a pleasant kind husband; for being so swallowed up with the sense of the Lord's wonderful goodness to me, I durst not give way to thoughts of that kind.

I did but slowly recover to health, which with some other pressure on my spirit, made me again to faint, and in hazard of wearying of the cross.

About that time I had a letter from a minister in the country; the subject of which was to encourage me under my grief and trouble. I was obliged to return an answer, which I was very unfit to do, being under deep discouragement. So when I began to write, I argued thus with myself: What am I going to do? shall I be so unworthy,

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as to bring up an ill report upon the cross, when I have so much occasion to the contrary, although at present I be under a cloud? this is very ungrateful, and unsuitable to a child of God. I will speak of his former loving-kindness, and hope for the time to come. So in a manner I forced myself to contradict my present doubts, and wrote in commendation of the cross; and must observe, I was at no loss thereby; for that same night, when I was reading Mr Rutherford's letters, particularly some elegant praises of the Lord Jesus, I found my soul so ravished with his love, that I was in a sort of transport of love and joy; and then every thing in and about my dear Lord was desirable and pleasant; yea, even the cross itself was lovely, as it was a mean to draw me to himself; and I was made to bless him for every circumstance thereof.—

Elsewhere she saith,—Many, very many more instances of the Lord's wonders of mercy to me have I had occasion to take notice of, though I have not particularly recorded them; but this I will leave upon record, that ever since the Lord was pleased in the riches of free grace to manifest himself to me, as my covenanted God, I never was under any considerable affliction, but I had reason to observe a JEHOVAH-JIREH. There are three particular texts of scripture by which I am frequently supported; and to me there is as it were a gradation in them. The first is, Jer. xxv. 6. "I will do you no hurt." The second is, Gen. xxxii. 12. where Jacob is pleading with the Lord, when in fear of his brother Esau, "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." And the third is, that sweet and comprehensive promise, Rom. viii. 28. "All things work together for good." &c. &c.

Rouse

*Rouse up, my sadned soul, and want outdare,
This is a time to trust, not to despair.*

*Faith in great want hath still more active been,
It lies not in the eye, but things unseen.*

*What though my love be gone, and I forgot ;
There is a loving God forgets me not :*

*He sees my wants, and he beholds my ways ;
And he denies me not, though he delays.*

*What for a while though he should still deny me ;
'Tis not to punish sure, but for to try me.*

*Faith raises those whom want would soon cast down,
Believes God smiles, although he seems to frown.*

*It brings things far remote near hand to be,
And makes us look beyond what now we see.*

*Faith leaves us not in just desiring things,
Till them to us, or us to them it brings.*

*It either helps us to the things we crave,
Or in our wants supports us till we have.*

*And cannot God as well relieve me now ?
Cannot he help unless I tell him how ?*

*To trust in God belongs to sinful men,
Not to prescribe to him the means, or when.*

*Look back, my soul, upon the time that's past,
How oft thy case has been brought to the last:*

When

*When little has been left of all thy store,
Then, not till then, has God afforded more.*

*And cannot God as well relieve me still?
What he has done, assures me that he will.*

F I N I S.



1811
The first of the year
was a very dry one
and the crops were
very poor. The
winter was also very
dry and the
crops were very
poor.

1812

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